

because they lived especially in the highlands, in closed communities. On the contrary, the Slavs from Greek lands were finally assimilated. This fact could be explained by conversion to Christianity, especially by the missionary activity of monks from the rural monasteries. There was no deliberate action of Hellenization except this Christian mission. On the other hand, colonization with people from Asia Minor had an important role in the assimilation of the Slavs in Peloponnesus, because it increased the proportion of the Grecophones who survived in some cities in the area covered by the Slavic newcomers.<sup>12</sup> The Christianization and Hellenization of the Slavs was achieved mainly in the ninth century. This process was called *graikoo* by Leon VI (886–912).<sup>13</sup>

In conclusion, Fallmerayer's theory is not completely wrong, because some of the present Greeks indeed descend from Slavs who were assimilated in the eighth–tenth centuries. But recognizing this does not mean denying the ethnic and cultural continuity between the ancient, medieval, and modern Greeks. Almost all the European peoples are the result of manifold mixtures. The present Greek people indeed have Slavs among their ancestors, but what matters is the survival of the Hellenic culture throughout the dark centuries of the early Middle Ages, which enabled the assimilation of the Slavs, Albanians, and Aromanians.

Greek scientist Peter Charanis affirms that:

It may be correct to say that the Greek race did not survive in all its purity, if indeed one may speak of racial purity even among the ancient Greeks, but it is not correct to say that the Hellenic race in Europe is completely exterminated. Besides, it is not really a question of race, but of culture, and of the survival of the Greek culture, as that culture, of course, evolved throughout the centuries, there can be absolutely no question. In this evolution, the Classical tradition, the Roman domination, and Christianity were the principal forces; the settlement of Slavs in Greece was of no decisive significance.<sup>14</sup>

## THE ALBANIANS

The origin of the Albanian people is one of the most disputed problems of Southeast European history. At first glance, it seems to be only a scientific problem, but the international relations of Albania transformed this issue into a controversy with political consequences. If the historians and linguists sustain the autochthonous origin of the Albanians in Albania and in Kosovo, then this conclusion is assumed by Albanian propaganda to support Albanian rights over all the regions where they are living now. If the historical and linguistic data do not support an ancient presence of the Albanians in Kosovo, then this point of view is embraced by the official



Serbian historiography. Both Albanians and Serbs have used theories about the Albanian ethnogenesis as weapons in their political propaganda. Since the establishment of the Communist regime in Albania, archaeologists were obliged to follow a nationalist agenda whose main purpose was to provide historical justification for the isolationist policy of Albania and especially for the permanent dispute with Yugoslavia.<sup>15</sup>

The obsession with autochthony led to some extreme ideas, like that of the Pelasgic origin of the Albanians, which would mean that this people has to be considered the forefather not only of the Balkan peoples, but also of the Europeans. This theory was developed by a French author of Albanian origin in a recent book that sustains the existence of three stages of Albanian ethnic identity along the last four millennia: Pelasgians, Illyrians, and Albanians. In his view, the Albanians are the most ancient European people. They lived without interruption in Albania and Kosovo.<sup>16</sup> We shall see below that Pelasgian origin was also claimed for the Macedonian Slavs and for the Aromanians by some dilettanti. However, the Albanians were the first in this contest for the oldest origin. A political proclamation from 1888 stated that:

The Albanians are descendants of the Pelasgians; Homer, the biggest poet ever, was a Pelasgian himself or, more correctly, Albanian. All heroes of Greece in Troy were Albanians, as well as Alexander the Great, Aristotle and many other glorious men of antiquity are erroneously characterized as Greeks.<sup>17</sup>

This strange opinion shows how the ideology forged during the period of national revival tried to ascribe as much as possible an old origin for the Albanians, in order to support their rights and their ethnic identity. Of course, professional historians and linguists do not share such ideas. They are instead divided by a long-lasting controversy, a still open question, which concerns the Thracian or the Illyrian origin of the Albanians.<sup>18</sup>

The Illyrian theory is sustained by Albanian scholars because it supports the autochthony of their people in present-day Albania and moreover in Kosovo and western Macedonia. The political consequences of this idea are obvious. A linguist remarked that "many scholars in Tirana have tended to depart a priori from a theory of Illyrian continuity and Albanian autochthony and then reflect on how to prove it, working indeed conscientiously to this end."<sup>19</sup> Another scholar observed in his turn that those who admit the Illyrian continuity and the autochthony of the Albanians have forgotten the social and historical significance of the migrations that occurred in the early Middle Ages, when various populations came into the Balkans from the north.<sup>20</sup> This remark is justified for all of Southeastern Europe.



The main arguments for the ethnogenesis of the Albanians in their present country and in Kosovo are:

- the supposed Illyrian origin of the language;
- the presence of an ancient tribe named Albanoi in present-day Albania;
- the weak Romanization in Albania and Kosovo;
- the place-names of ancient origin transmitted by the Albanian language located in Albania, Kosovo, and southern Serbia;
- the existence of an archaeological culture dated to the seventh–eighth centuries ascribed to the Protoalbanians.

The small number of Greek loan words in the basic Albanian lexis and the presence of many Latin words points to the location of the ethnogenesis of the Albanians as a region far from the Greek area and at the same time subjected to Roman influence. That region was not Romanized but only influenced by the Latin language. The second issue is the Thracian versus the Illyrian origin of the Albanian language. It is true that some Albanian words and place-names descend from Illyrian, but it was proven by a great specialist in the Balkan languages, Gustav Weigand, that the language itself was not of Illyrian stock.<sup>21</sup> Many linguists (not only Albanians) tried to establish a link between Illyrian and Albanian, but they did not achieve clear results. In fact, the phonetics and the main part of the lexis are of Thracian origin and for this reason are akin with the Dacian substratum of the Romanian language.<sup>22</sup>

The Illyrian tribe Albanoi and the place Albanopolis (names recorded by Ptolemy, *Geographia*, III. 12. 20) could be located near Krujë,<sup>23</sup> but nothing proves a relation with the medieval Albanians, whose name appears for the first time in the eleventh century in Byzantine sources. The name given by the Albanians themselves is Shqipëtarë ("eagles"), but they are recorded in medieval sources with the names Arbanitai, Arberi. The names Arbër ("Albanian") and Arbëri ("Albania") are used now by the Albanians who immigrated to southern Italy, but not by those from Albania. The origin of this ethnic name is the word *arbër*, which comes from the Indo-European root *alb-* = "mountain, tableland."<sup>24</sup>

The territory of Albania was not entirely Romanized, although it was included from an early period in the Roman state (168 BCE). Only in the plains and on the seashore was Romanization quite successful. Latin inscriptions were discovered in this region. There are no proofs for the survival of the Illyrian language in the Late Roman period (as some Albanian philologists supposed in order to establish a link with the future Albanian language). The surviving Illyrian person names and the representations of Illyrian popular dress on tombstones are not enough to prove the so-called resistance against Romanization.<sup>25</sup> The continuous use of the



names *Illyricum* and *Illyri* in late ancient writings does not prove the perpetuation of the non-Romanized Illyrians, as some researchers have supposed.<sup>26</sup> Like the same name *Illyrioi* used by the tenth–twelfth-century Byzantine authors for the Serbians, the late ancient name *Illyri* was an archaism that did not reflect the real existence of an Illyrian people. On the other hand, it is certain that the region traversed by *Via Egnatia* (by the center of Albania) was strongly Romanized. Being an important trading route, *Via Egnatia* attracted Latinophone people from different Roman provinces. Having a great strategic value, this zone was colonized with Roman settlements. The mapping of Latin inscriptions and Roman settlements clearly shows the Romanization of this area.<sup>27</sup> We can therefore conclude that only the northern mountain region of Albania (Mati) remained outside Romanization.

Romanian philologist H. Mihăescu has shown that the Latin influence was exerted over the Albanian language in another area than the primary homeland of the Romanian language. The Latin words common to Albanian and Romanian are less than the words that survived only in Albanian and in the Western Romance languages (45 versus 163). This means that the Albanian language evolved in a region with quite strong relations with the Western Romance languages and without a direct contact with the area where the Romanian language was born. H. Mihăescu located this region in present-day Albania, in Kosovo, and in the western part of Macedonia, up to Prishtina and Bitolia.<sup>28</sup> Based on the comparison of the Latin words of Romanian and Albanian, linguist Cătălina Vătăşescu remarked that Albanian was influenced by a disappeared Romance language, other than Dalmatian and Romanian.<sup>29</sup>

Several place-names and river names of Roman origin survived in Albania. Transmission through a Slavic language is excluded, but borrowing from the speakers of a Romance language, during the early Middle Ages, can be taken into consideration. This was the solution proposed by Yugoslavian linguist Ivan Popović; he said that the surviving Roman people left the names to the Slavs and then the Albanians took them from the Slavs.<sup>30</sup> His ideas were rejected by Albanian scholars,<sup>31</sup> but recently it was shown that a local Roman population that survived at least until the seventh century transmitted some place-names in Albania. Some of these names of minor importance (small hills, rivulets) are very significant for the intermediary position of this language, between the Romanian and the Western Romance languages. For instance, the place-names Shkortull (from Lat. *curtus*) and Volpul (from Lat. *vulpes*) have the suffix *-ul*, which is specific for Romanian, in combination with the evolution from *u* to *o*, which occurred in the Western Romance area.<sup>32</sup> This Latin-speaking population could be the missing link by which the Latin words were passed down to Albanian.



This does not mean that Latin place-names are a majority in Albania. A recent study on the river names in Albania has shown that a great part of them are of Albanian origin. The Slavic names are more widespread in the southern half of Albania, a plain region previously Romanized, where the Slavs preferred to settle during the seventh century. This southern area suffered a deep Slavic influence, while the north kept many Albanian names. The terms for the mountain trees are Albanian, while those for the species from the plain are mostly foreign.<sup>33</sup> This research proves that Albanians lived for a long time in the Mati tableland, where they imposed their names, while the Slavs did the same thing in the plain region of Albania.

Did the Albanians' ancestors live in Mati since the Roman period? Archaeology was used to prove this, by means of the supposed common elements between the ancient Illyrians and the Albanians. According to Albanian historians, the missing link is the Komani-Krujë culture (seventh–eighth centuries), which is represented by finds from fortresses, open settlements, and cemeteries. The exhumed cemeteries and the open and fortified settlements of the Komani-Krujë culture (Krujë, Durrës, Dalmace, Shurdhah, Aphiona, etc.) contain many objects of Byzantine fashion (belt buckles, fibulae, earrings, coins), imported from Byzantine towns or made in local workshops. The Christian character is sure, at least for some graves. Many graves were protected with stones and bricks (a funeral rite of Roman origin). The cemeteries are usually located near fortresses and churches. The Komani-Krujë culture was widespread in the northern part of Albania, but also in Kosovo, southern Albania, and Epirus. The official interpretation is that this culture was created on an Illyrian background by the ancestors of the Albanians, who lived without interruption in all these regions.<sup>34</sup>

On the basis of the supposed ethnic features of this culture, the Albanian homeland was located near Krujë, in the rocky region crossed by the river Mati, that was not Romanized and colonized in the Roman period. The same zone was identified with the so-called Arbanon, a region recorded since the eleventh century by Byzantine authors.<sup>35</sup> As a matter of fact, the real location of Arbanon was south of the Shkumbin valley. Alain Ducellier postulates that in this area survived the ancestors of the Albanians when the neighboring areas were occupied by the Slavs. In this region called Arbanon they were subject to certain Byzantine influences.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, according to this theory, the Albanians are autochthonous in their present country. The central part of Albania was also the source from whence the Albanians spread to the north and south.

As concerns the Komani-Krujë culture, the situation is more complicated than Albanian historians believe. Serbian archaeologist Vladislav Popović<sup>37</sup> supposed that this culture was created by a Roman and urban



population, which cannot be identified with the Proto-Albanians. According to him, this culture belonged to the Roman population living along *Via Egnatia*. This area remained until the seventh–eighth centuries under a strong Byzantine influence. The area of this culture is nearly the same as that where Latin was spoken in antiquity (defined on the basis of inscriptions). The region was Romanized. On the other hand, in the same area many present place-names of Latin origin are known. It is therefore possible that the Komani-Krujë culture was the archaeological expression of a Roman, not Proto-Albanian, population.

This theory was of course rejected by the official Albanian archaeologists,<sup>38</sup> but their arguments are not convincing. They cannot explain the large amount of Byzantine and Christian objects in the environment of this culture. A pastoral population like the Albanians was not able to create a culture of Byzantine urban fashion. The assertion<sup>39</sup> that Albanians developed an urban civilization in the early Middle Ages and that they peopled the late Roman fortified settlements is fanciful.

In 2002, the young Albanian archaeologist Etleva Nallbani received from the Sorbonne her PhD for a dissertation entitled “La civilisation de Komani de l’antiquité tardive au haut Moyen Âge: étude du mobilier métallique” (not yet published). The main ideas were summarized in two short studies (one of them published in a Croatian scientific journal).<sup>40</sup> She has abandoned the traditional theory put forward by Albanian archaeology, that the Komani-Krujë culture is Proto-Albanian. Instead, she emphasizes the integration in the Byzantine civilization and the urban roots of this civilization. This new approach is shared by British archaeologist William Bowden, who concludes that the archaeological evidence does not support a single ethnic identification. On the contrary, it suggests that the appearance of the rich graves reflected significant social changes and that these communities “were participating in a European-wide medium of funerary practice, rather than constructing an identity that consciously expressed their difference from their neighbors.”<sup>41</sup>

Sometimes, Albanian historians and linguists maintain that the area of the Albanian ethnogenesis includes not only the Mati tableland, but also all of present-day Albania together with Kosovo and some parts from Macedonia and Montenegro.<sup>42</sup> The genesis of the Albanians in Albania, Kosovo, and the western part of Macedonia (the Roman provinces Epirus Nova, Epirus Vetus, Praevalitana, and Dardania, Macedonia) is also supposed by some foreign linguists and historians.<sup>43</sup>

Some major ancient place-names from Albania, Kosovo, and southern Serbia were transmitted by the Albanian language, not by a Slavic path: Dyrrachion > Durrës, Lissus > Lesh, Scodra > Shkodër, Isamnus > Ishëm, Mathis > Mati, Drinus > Drin, Naissus > Niš, Scupi > Shkup, Scardus > Shar, Astibos > Shtip. They prove that the ancestors of the Albanians were



already present in southern Serbia and Macedonia at least since the seventh century and that the Slavs took the names from them. For this reason some researchers hold that the ethnogenesis area of the Albanians includes a region located north of their present homeland, a region where they lived even before the settlement of the Slavs.<sup>44</sup>

In antiquity, the territory of Kosovo belonged to the regions of Dardania and Paeonia. Dardania was an area mixed between Thracians and Illyrians. The Paeonae were Thracians. I. I. Russu defined with great precision the spreading areas of the Thracian and Illyrian tribes. It can be observed that the western part of the present Kosovo province was peopled by Illyrians, while the east was Thracian. Places like Prishtina and Tetovo are located just on the blurred line between these territories.<sup>45</sup> The Dardanians are often considered to be a tribe with an intermediary position between Thracians and Illyrians.<sup>46</sup>

Dardania (Kosovo) was seen as the homeland of the future Albanians, where they lived without any break.<sup>47</sup> The name of Dardanians was put in relation with the Albanian word *dardhë* ("pear"), whose meaning can also be found in the Slavic place-name Kruševac. The Dardanians were shepherds; their cheese (*caseus dardanicus*) was well-known in the Roman period, as was the cheese prepared by the Vlach shepherds in medieval Byzantium and Dalmatia.<sup>48</sup> The continuity of traditional occupations in this mountain region is obvious, but it was not linked to a specific ethnicity. Dardania was indeed a less Romanized area because the geographical conditions were improper for urbanization.<sup>49</sup> It is possible that the ancestors of the Albanians were the inhabitants of Dardania, that is in Kosovo, in the Roman period, but there are also other possibilities.

The Romanization of the plain areas of the Illyrian provinces contradicts all the hypotheses based on the descent of the Albanians from a population that lived there. The primary homeland of the Albanians should be searched for in an isolated area, where Romanization was not achieved and where geographic conditions allowed the survival of a pastoral population influenced by Roman civilization, but not entirely Romanized. This region can be found in the rockiest parts of the Balkan Peninsula or even outside the Roman Empire (as we shall see below). The theory of ethnogenesis in the Mati tableland is suitable from this point of view, but the arguments presented above show its inconsistency, because the Komani-Krujë culture does not bring clear evidence for Illyrian-Albanian continuity in Mati.

Romanian linguist Alexandru Philippide reaches the conclusion that the Albanians emerged as a new people in the non-Romanized enclave located in Bosnia between the rivers Vrbas (at west) and Drina (at east). He theorizes that the Albanians descended from the Pannonians, an Illyrian tribe that also inhabited that area.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the Pannonians lived in an



other area to the north. It is otherwise true that the region proposed by Philippide was less Romanized. This theory, now forgotten, was based only on the identification of an area that was not Romanized.

German linguist Gottfried Schramm postulated recently that Albanians are the inheritors of the Bessi, a Thracian tribe that was not Romanized because it lived in the mountain regions of the provinces Dacia Mediterranea and Dardania. This means that the homeland of the Albanians should be located in southern Serbia, Kosovo, and western Macedonia. Schramm explains the survival of the Bessian language by early conversion to Christianity, in the late fourth century, through the mission of St. Nicetas of Remesiana. He supposes that St. Nicetas translated the Holy Bible into the Bessian language. According to this theory, the Bessi were deported at the beginning of the ninth century by the Byzantine army from Bulgaria to the center of present-day Albania, with the purpose of fighting against Bulgaria and strengthening the defense of the newly established province of Dyrrachion. The Bessi were previously persecuted by Bulgarians because of their Christian faith. In their new homeland, the ancestors of the Albanians took the geographical term Arbanon as their ethnic name. They assimilated the local populations of Greek, Roman, and Slavic origins.<sup>51</sup>

The descent of the Albanians from Bessi is also claimed by a Polish linguist in a short paper that invites researchers to debate this issue,<sup>52</sup> and it was also suggested in an old study about the Aromanians.<sup>53</sup>

It is true that some unclear data about the survival of the Bessian language until the sixth century exist,<sup>54</sup> but nothing proves that a great number of non-Romanized Bessi still existed until the ninth century. As Cătălina Vătăşescu remarks, the survival of the genuine language as a result of Christianization is unthinkable. All the known cases show that conversion to Christianity strengthened Romanization. So, at least a part of the theory expressed by Schramm does not hold up. The Christian Latin words in Albanian belong to several periods of influence, which are not easy to put into a chronological frame. Their origin is sometimes disputable.<sup>55</sup> An interesting example is *qishë* "church," derived by Schramm from the Latin *ecclesia*.<sup>56</sup> There is also another point of view, which says that this Albanian word came from the Italian *chiesa*.<sup>57</sup> In this case, the word could be easily explained as a testimony of the conversion to the Catholic rites of a part of the Albanian people, during the eleventh-twelfth centuries.

The idea of Albanian-Romanian symbiosis in the mountains between Shtip and the western border of Bulgaria is not justified. Schramm took this idea from the old theory developed by Robert Roesler (1871) and Gustav Weigand (1895), also shared by some other linguists. Although it is certain that the common Albanian-Romanian words could be explained



as Dacian survivals in Romanian, Schramm continues to put forth the obsolete idea that these words show that Romanians lived together with Albanians during the early Middle Ages. (In other works, Schramm tries to give new arguments for the politically biased theory of the late immigration of Romanians from the Balkans to their present country.)<sup>58</sup> C. Vățășescu rejects the theory of "Romanian-Albanian symbiosis," because the common elements are less significant than the differences between these languages.<sup>59</sup>

A viewpoint quite similar to that of G. Schramm is held by Bulgarian linguist Vladimir Georgiev. Based on the similarities between Romanian and Albanian, he concludes that the latter derived from the Gaetic language spoken in Moesia and that the ancestors of the Albanians came from the Morava basin and from Banat,<sup>60</sup> but this theory has no support in historical sources.

An older theory first expressed by Romanian scholars Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu (1876, 1901), Vasile Pârvan (1906), and Sextil Puflcariu (1910) was resumed by Ion I. Russu.<sup>61</sup> In a posthumous book, Russu theorized that the Albanians descend from the tribe of Carpi (free Dacians from Moldavia). The Carpi indeed colonized an area on Roman soil after the end of the third century. The main idea of this theory is based on the supposition that a large group of people could not escape Romanization if they lived inside the Roman Empire. For this reason, only an immigrated people from Barbaricum could be considered the ancestor of the Albanians. The Carpic origin could easily explain the likeness between the Romanian and Albanian languages and even the partial Romanization of the Albanians. The tribe of Carpi was influenced by Roman civilization in its North-Danubian homeland. This influence continued to be exerted after they settled inside the Roman Empire, but their original language was preserved. Migration toward the southwestern part of the province Moesia Superior and toward Dardania could be dated in the fourth–sixth centuries, that is before the arrival of the Slavs. In the new homeland, the inheritors of the Carpi took a new ethnic name. Russu supposed that this migration was peaceful and slow, because the Carpi remained a sedentary people.

The major problem with the theory expressed by Russu is the lack of data about the intermediary places occupied by the ancestors of the Albanians, between Danube and their present country. On the other hand, this theory explains the affinities of the Albanian language with the Romanian, better than the so-called Albanian–Romanian symbiosis in the triangle Niš–Skopje–Sofia. The common Romanian–Albanian elements are in this case the result of the common substratum. Settled in Dardania (Kosovo) and in western Macedonia by the sixth century, the ancestors of the Albanians were able to borrow many Greek and especially Latin



words, together with the local toponymy, before the Slavic invasions. This explains the transmission of several ancient place-names and river names through the Albanian language, without a Slavic intermediary form. It could be supposed that the Albanians were pushed by Slavic invasions from Dardania and Macedonia toward the west and southwest, to the higher regions. Linguist G. Ivănescu remarked that a compromise could be made between the ethnogenesis of the Albanians into a region not Romanized and the ethnogenesis in Dardania (Kosovo): he maintains that the ancestors of the Albanians arrived in Albania from a non-Romanized zone of Dardania, before or during the period when the Slavs began their migrations.<sup>62</sup>

Even if I. I. Russu was right, it seems possible that the Albanians were present in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula before the Slavic invasions. Because their forefathers were Thracians or Dacians subjected to a partial Romanization, they are kin to the Romanians. Albanians living in Kosovo from ancient times has not been excluded, but this theory needs more proof. They survived because they took refuge in the mountains of northern Albania, escaping from Slavization. Historical sources record Albanians in that mountain area since the eleventh century. They may have begun to people the plain areas as early as the ninth century. V. Popović supposes that the conversion of the Albanians to a sedentary way of life was due to the economic and military needs of the newly established Byzantine province Dyrrachion, founded at the beginning of the ninth century.<sup>63</sup> In these circumstances, the Albanian tribes became step-by-step a significant proportion of the population of the plain areas, surpassing the Slavic and Romance populations.

The Albanian ethnogenesis remains an open question that will continue to fuel the propagandistic fight for Kosovo. Because no theory can be considered certain so far, discussions about the original homeland of the Albanian people could include Kosovo with a certain probability, giving strong proof to the Albanian claims.

## THE BULGARIANS

One of the most fanciful ethnogenetic theories with political aims was the autochthony of the Bulgarians in the Balkan Peninsula. It is really difficult to believe that some authors affirmed that Bulgarians lived in Macedonia since classical antiquity, that Zeus was a name of Bulgarian origin, and that St. Paul christened the Macedonian Bulgarians. Yet, one of the founders of Bulgarian historiography, Gheorghi Sava Rakovski (1821–1867), launched this theory of the presence of Bulgarians in Macedonia before the Common Era, in a book published in 1859. Romantic historiography



legitimate the conflicts with the Serbs by the "discovery" of a different ethnic origin.

## NOTES

1. See a presentation of the author and of his work in F. J. Frost, Fallmerayer Revisited, *Migrations* 1989, 109–114.

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3. See for this C. Carras, Greek Identity: A Long View, *Balkan Identities*, 315–319.

4. For Fallmerayer's theory and its political implications, see S. G. Xydis, Medieval Origins of Modern Greek Nationalism, *BS*, 9, 1 (1968), 3; G. Veloudis, Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer und die Entstehung der neugriechischen Historismus, *SOF*, 29, 1970, 43–90; J. V. A. Fine Jr., *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, Ann Arbor, MI, 1991, 59–64; V. Traikov, *Curentele ideologice și programe din mișcările de eliberare națională din Balcani până în anul 1878*, București, 1986, 247; B. G. Spiridonakis, *Grecs, occidentaux et Turcs de 1054 à 1453, quatre siècles de relations internationales*, Thessalonique, 1990, 27–29; M. W. Weithmann, Interdisziplinäre diskrepanzen in der "Slavenfrage" Griechenlands, *ZB*, 30, 1 (1994), 85–86; F. Curta, Barbarians in Dark-Age Greece: Slavs or Avars? in Ts. Stepanov & V. Vachkova (eds.), *Civitas divino-humana. In honorem annorum LX Georgii Bakalov*, Sofia 2004, 513–514; F. Curta, L'administration Byzantine dans les Balkans pendant la "grande brèche": Le témoignage des sceaux. *Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi*, serie seconda, 6 (2004), 157.

5. R. J. H. Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism*, University of Cincinnati, OH, 1963, 21–42.

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7. M. Vasmer, *Die Slaven in Griechenland*, Berlin, 1941.

8. G. G. Arnakis, Byzantium and Greece. A Review Article. A Propos of Romilly Jenkins, *Byzantium and Byzantinism*, *BS*, 4, 2 (1963), 396–397; Weithmann 1994a, 86.

9. See Charanis 1970, 27, footnote 96.

10. E. Gamillscheg, *Über die Herkunft der Rumänen*, Berlin, 1940.

11. Charanis 1970, 33–34; Charanis 1978, 93–97; J. Koder, Zur Frage der Slavischen Siedlungsgebiete im mittelalterlichen Griechenland, *BZ*, 71, 2 (1978), 315–331; M. Graebner, The Slavs in Byzantine Empire. Absorption, Semi-Autonomy and the Limits of Byzantinization, *BB*, 5 (1978), 48–54; Charanis 1979, 193–218; Weithmann 1994a, 91–93, 104; M. W. Weithmann, Politische und ethnische Veränderungen in Griechenland am Übergang von der Antike zum Frühmittelalter. *Die*



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16. M. Aref, *Albanie (Histoire et langue) ou l'incroyable odysée d'un peuple préhellénique*, Paris, 2003.

17. K. Giakoumis, Fourteenth-Century Albanian Migration and the 'Relative Autochthony' of the Albanians in Epeiros. The Case of Gjirokastër, *BMGS*, 27 (2003), 173, footnote 7.

18. See detailed presentations of the historiography at E. Çabej, Le problème du territoire de la formation de la langue Albanaise, *AIESEEB*, 10, 2 (1972), 71–82; H. Mihăescu, *La romanité dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe*, București, 1993, 78–88; I. I. Russu, *Obârșia tracică a românilor și albanezilor. Clarificări comparativ-istorice și etnologice*, Cluj-Napoca, 1995, 21–36.

19. R. Elsie, Hydronimica Albanica—A Survey of River Names in Albania, *ZB*, 30, 1 (1994), 3.

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21. G. Weigand, Sind die Albaner die Nachkommen der Illyrer oder der Thraker?, *Balkan-Archiv* (Leipzig), 3 (1927), 227–251.

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26. S. Anamali, The Illyrians and the Albanians, in *Kosova* 1993, 11.



27. Mihăescu 1993, 70–78; C. Poghirc, Romanisation linguistique et culturelle dans les Balkans. Survivances et evolution, *Les Aroumains*, 36–39.

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29. C. Vătăşescu, *Vocabularul de origine latină din limba albaneză în comparație cu româna*, Bucureşti, 1997.

30. I. Popović, Slaven und Albaner in Albanien und Montenegro. Zum Problem der Slavisch–Albanischen Sprachchronologie, *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie*, 26 (1957–1958), 301–324.

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32. I. Popović, Byzantins, Slaves et autochtones dans les provinces de Prévalitaine et Nouvelle Epire, in *Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École Française de Rome (Rome, 12–14 Mai 1982)* (Collection de l'École Française de Rome, 77), Rome, 1984, 226–227; I. Popović, L'Albanie pendant la Basse Antiquité, *Les Illyriens* 1988, 275–276.

33. Elsie 1994, 3–43.

34. See especially: S. Anamali, La nécropole de Krujë et la civilisation du haut moyen âge en Albanie du Nord, *SA*, 1 (1964), 149–181; Idem, Le problème de la civilisation haute-médiévale Albanaise à la lumière des nouvelles découvertes archéologiques, *SA*, 3, 1 (1966), 199–211; Idem, De la civilisation haute-médiévale Albanaise, in *Les Illyriens et la genèse des Albanais. Travaux de la session du 3–4 mars 1969*, Tirana, 1971, 183–189; S. Anamali & H. Spahiu, Une nécropole albanaise à Kruje, *Iliria*, 9–10 (1979–1980), 79–92; F. Tartari, Un cimetière du Haut Moyen Âge à Durrës, *Iliria*, 14, 1 (1984), 227–250; H. Spahiu, Éléments de la tradition antique dans la culture des nécropoles du Haut Moyen Âge Albanais, *Iliria*, 16, 1 (1986), 268–269.

35. G. Stadtmüller, Forschungen zur Albanischen Frühgeschichte, *AECO*, 7, 1–3 (1941), 1–196; Anamali 1972, 127; W. Zeitler, Das lateinische Erbe im Albanischen und die älteren Wohnsitze der Albaner, *ZB*, 14 (1978), 205–206.

36. A. Ducellier, L'Arbanon et les Albanais au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, *TM*, 3 (1968), 365–368.

37. Popović 1984, 214–244; Popović 1988, 251–283. Some doubts about the Proto-Albanian character of the Komani-Krujë culture were already expressed by J. Kovačević (Les Slaves et la population dans l'Illyricum, *Berichte* 1973, vol. 2, 151). Dj. Janković (*Scientific Discussion on Noel Malcolm's Book "Kosovo. A Short History"* (London, Macmillan, 1998, 492). October 8, 1999, Institute of History of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts [[www.rastko.org.yu/kosovo/istorija/malkolm/djankovic-facts.html](http://www.rastko.org.yu/kosovo/istorija/malkolm/djankovic-facts.html)], 1999) suggested that the culture was introduced by the people that came from Pannonia under the leadership of Kuver, taking into account the presumed relation with a treasure found at Vrap, in the area of the Komani-Krujë culture, ascribed by some researchers to this chief. The date and the significance of the treasure are still disputed, while the analogies with the artifacts from the Avarian cemeteries could be explained as a result of a common Byzantine influence.

38. Anamali 1993, 13–15.

39. A. Buda, Les Illyriens du sud, un problème d'historiographie, *AIESEEB*, 10 (1972), 2, 68.

40. E. Nailbani, Résurgence des traditions de l'Antiquité tardive dans les Balkans occidentaux: Étude des sépultures du nord de l'Albanie, *Hortus Artium*



*Mediaevalium. Journal of the International Research Center for Late Antiquity and Middle Ages*, 10 (2004), 25–42; Eadem, Transformations et continuité dans l'Ouest des Balkans: Le cas de la civilisation de Komani (VIe–IXe siècles), in *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité. IV. Actes du IVe Colloque international de Grenoble, 10–12 octobre 2002*, Paris, 2004, 481–490.

41. W. Bowden, The Construction of Identities in Post-Roman Albania, in L. Lavran & W. Bowden (eds.), *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology*, Leiden, 2003, 57–78 (quotation at 75); Bowden & Hodges 2004, 199–200.

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46. F. Papazoglu, *The Central Balkan Tribes in Preroman Times*, Amsterdam, 1978, 195–200.

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65. V. Georgiev, *Die Träger der kretisch-mykenischen Kultur, ihre Herkunft und ihre Sprache*, Sofia, 1937. See also N. Andriotes, *The Language and the Greek Origin of the Ancient Macedonians*, Thessaloniki, 1978, 18.
66. For the political manipulation of medieval history in Communist Bulgaria, see M. Pundeff, *Nationalism and Communism in Bulgaria*, SOF, 29 (1970), 161–162.
67. Kyriakides 1955, 14; Russu 1976, 90–91.
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70. R. Lauer, *Genese und Funktion des Illyrischen Ideologems in den südslawischen Literaturen (16. bis Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts)*, in K.-D. Grothusen (ed.), *Ethnogenese und Staatsbildung in Südosteuropa*, Göttingen, 1974, 116–143; Traikov 1986, 162–168; A. Stipcević, *The Question of Illyrian-Albanian Continuity and Its Political Topicality Today* ([www.alb-net.com/illyrians.htm](http://www.alb-net.com/illyrians.htm)); N. Malcolm, *Storia di Bosnia dalle origini ai giorni nostri*, Milano, 2000, 28.
71. S. Guldescu, *History of Medieval Croatia*, The Hague, 1964, 317–320.
72. This was the reason why the journal *Südost-Deutsche Forschungen* (the future *Südost Forschungen*) was founded at München in 1936. The indisputable scientific value of this periodical does not exclude its primary political aim, to support the Balkan policy of the Nazi regime. Another similar review was *Deutsche Forschung im Südosten* (issued in 1942). A. Pippidi, *Changes of Emphasis, Greek Christendom, Westernization, South-Eastern Europe, and Neo-Mittel Europa*,



*Balkanologie*, 3, 2 (1999), 103, remarked too the relationship between this use of the term *south-east* and the idea of the German vital space.

73. Malcolm 2000, 28–29.

74. The link between the names Hrvati and Harahvati was proposed by S. Sakač, *Iranische Herkunft des kroatischen Volksnamen*, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 15 (1949), 313–340. A similar hypothesis was held by G. Vernadsky, *The Origin of the Name Rus'*, *SOF*, 15 (1956), 171 (from the Iranian word *xvarva*, "sun"). For the theory of the Iranian origin, see also Guldescu 1964, 33–42; O. Karatay, *Ogur Connection in the Croatian and Serbian Migrations*, in G. H. Celâl, C. C. Oguz, & O. Karatay (eds.), *The Turks*, vol. 1, Ankara, 2002, 554.

75. H. Grégoire, *L'origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes*, *Byzantion*, 17 (1945), 91–116.

76. V. Popović, *Koubrat, Kouber et Asparouch*, *Starinar* (Belgrade), 37, 1986, 127–128; W. Pohl, *Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa, 567–822 n. Chr.*, München, 1988, 261–268.

77. P. J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, Princeton, NJ, 2002, 36, 148, 171.

78. Z. Golab, *The Origins of the Slavs. A Linguist's View*, Columbus, 1991, 324–327.

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80. R. Katičić, *Die Anfänge des Kroatischen states*, in H. Friesinger & F. Daim, *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, I (DAW, 179), Wien, 1985, 309 considered improbable the Iranian origin of the Croats.

81. O. Kronsteiner, *Gab es unter den Alpenslawen eine Kroatische ethnische Gruppe?*, *WSJ*, 24 (1978), 137–157; W. Pohl, *Das Awarenreich und die "Kroatischen" Ethnogenesen*, in H. Friesinger & F. Daim (eds.), *Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn*, I (DAW, 179, 1985), 293–298. The theory was also accepted by Geary 2002, 148, but denied by A. Tietze, *Kroaten ein türkisches Ethnonym?*, *WSJ*, 25 (1979), 140.

82. Karatay 2002, 557–560.

83. Karatay 2002, 559–560; O. Karatay, *Contribution to the Debates on the Origin of the Medieval Bosnian Royal Dynasty Kotromanids*, in *Eran und Aneran. Webfestschrift Marshak. Studies presented to Boris Ilich Marshak on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*. Electronic Version, Buenos Aires ([www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/karatay.pdf](http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/karatay.pdf)), 2003, 6, 13–15.

84. J. V. A. Fine Jr., 2000, 208–218.

85. D. Janković, *Pogreb Srba u ranom srednjem veku*, in *Works of the VIth International Congress of Slavic Archaeology*, vol. 1: *Problems of Slavic Archaeology*, Moscow 1997, 382–393; D. Janković, *Srpske gromile*, Belgrade, 1998; Dj. Janković, *The Serbian Questions in the Balkans*, Faculty of Geography, Belgrade ([www.rastko.org.yu/arheologija/djankovic-serbs\\_balkans.htm](http://www.rastko.org.yu/arheologija/djankovic-serbs_balkans.htm)), 1995; Janković 1999.

86. S. Pantelić, *Die neue Version der Migration der Kroaten, Duleben und Wolinjanen*, in *Works of the VIth International Congress of Slavic Archaeology*, vol. 3: *Ethnogenesis and Ethnocultural Contacts of the Slavs*, Moscow, 1997, 242–250.

87. H. Kunstmann, *Die Slawen: Ihre Name, ihre Wanderung nach Europa und die Anfänge der russischen Geschichte in historisch-onomastischer Sicht*, Stuttgart, 1996



and previous papers published especially in the journal *Die Welt der Slaven* (München).

88. Vacalopoulos 1970, 13; A. Lazarou, *L'Aroumain et ses rapports avec le Grec*, Thessalonique, 1986, 103.

89. P. Ș. Năsturel, Les Valaques Balkaniques aux Xe–XIIIe siècles (Mouvements de population et colonisation dans la Roumanie Grecque et Latine), *BF*, 7 (1979), 94–95, 97, 102–105.

90. E. Stănescu, Byzance et les Pays Roumains aux IXe–XVe siècles, *CIEB XIV*, vol. I, 429.

91. T. J. Winnifrith, *The Vlachs, the History of a Balkan People*, London, 1987, 42.

92. Th. Capidan, *L'origine des Macédo-Roumains. Réponse à M. le professeur Kéramopoulos de l'Académie d'Athènes*, Bucarest, 1939. A. Keramopoulos continued to support this theory in other works, published between 1945 and 1953.

93. Vacalopoulos 1970, 13–14.

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95. M. Caragiu-Marioțeanu, À propos de la latinité de l'aroumain (à la lumière des dernières recherches), *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique*, 33, 4 (1988), 237–250.

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97. N. Caranica, *Les Aroumains, recherche sur l'identité d'une ethnie*, Besançon, 1990.

98. B. C. Stefanoski, *Limba traco-dacă, fundul a limbilor indo-europeane*, Casa Gramosta, Tetova, 1993; Idem, *Geneza limbii armâne-macedonene*, ed. Mirton, Timișoara, 1995; Idem, *Pelasghyi. Limbă, carte, numă*, Casa Gramosta, Tetova, 1998.

99. S. N. Liakos, *L'origine des Albanais et Roumains. Complement (Daco-geto-sclavinica)*, Thessaloniki, 1972. Other pamphlets are: "The Origin of the Aromani-ans" (1965), "The Thraco-Dacian Origin of the Albanians" (1973), and "The Illyrian Origin of the ancient Macedonians" (1980).

100. Panov 2001, 31.

101. See an overview at H. Guillorel & P. Michels, Continuité territoriale, continuité nationale: L'exemple Yougoslave, *Balkanologie*, 1, 1 (1997), 95–118.



important factor, and usually a disturbing factor, in Balkan affairs in the modern period.

The same author shows how Serbia claims the frontiers of the empire of Stephen Dušan, while Bulgaria expresses similar pretensions on the basis of the maximal extent of the medieval state ruled by Symeon. In order to be better understood by a Western reader, he closes these remarks with a suggestive comparison: "one must imagine a British statesman citing the empire of Edward III as justification for claiming half of modern France."<sup>2</sup> The meaning of this example is that *the conquests made by medieval kingdoms cannot justify the territorial claims of the modern states*. At the same time, this reveals the differences between Western and Balkan mentalities. Only in the Balkans is medieval history still used as an instrument for contemporary policy, in the international and interethnic disputes for Kosovo, Bosnia, and Macedonia.

### KOSOVO—SERBIAN OR ALBANIAN?

Kosovo is a tableland with an altitude of 300–500 m and a surface of 10.887 km<sup>2</sup>, located between the Šar Mountains (south), Southern Morava (east), Kopaonik Mountains (north), and the Prokletije Mountains (west). In fact, the region usually called Kosovo is composed of two zones: the real Kosovo and Metohija (named after the numerous medieval monastery estates, called *metoh*). Metohija (the western part) is mainly agricultural, while Kosovo (the eastern part) has important mineral resources (silver, lead, coal) that have been exploited since the Middle Ages. The Albanian name of the Metohija plain is Dukagjini. By its position at the crossroads of the Ibar, Binačka Morava, and Vardar valleys, Kosovo has an obvious strategic importance.<sup>3</sup>

Serbian or Albanian rights over Kosovo were and continue to be argued on the basis of ancient and medieval history. The Serbs claim the indisputable value of their cultural heritage in Kosovo,<sup>4</sup> while the Albanians say they lived there before the settlement of the Slavs in the Balkan Peninsula and, anyway, before the conquest of Kosovo by Serbia. Therefore, the dispute concerns the ethnogenesis of the Albanians and the land settled by them in the period of the Slavic migrations. The still open issue of the Albanian origin is thus a propagandistic weapon used by both parties. Some scientific works dealing with this issue are undoubtedly unbiased, but others were produced under political command or under special circumstances that influenced their objectivity. The best example is the study by renowned Yugoslavian historian and archaeologist Vladislav Popović about late ancient Albania,<sup>5</sup> which brings valuable proof against the the-



ory of the Albanian origin of the Komani-Krujë culture, a dogma of Albanian historiography. The study itself is serious, but we should remark that it appeared in 1988 in a collection of papers from a session organized in 1986 by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The ultimate purpose of that session was to reject the Albanian propaganda and Albanian points of view about Kosovo. In the introduction of the volume, the deputy president of the Serbian Academy, A. Isaković, states that Yugoslavian historians should bring the study of the Albanian ethnogenesis back into the real scientific framework, because it was biased by the lack of objectivity of Albanian historians. Moreover, he affirms that a sustained campaign against Yugoslavia is carried on in Albania, remembering "the well-known events from Kosovo."<sup>6</sup>

The papers presented at this session had indeed a high scientific level, but the conference was organized with a political target, when the inter-ethnic conflict of Kosovo was already fired up by the riots that occurred in 1981 at Prishtina. The Yugoslavian historians were thus determined to find various arguments against the Albanian claims on Kosovo. One of these arguments was the rejection of Albanian autochthony in Kosovo. They denied the Illyrian origin of the Dardanians and the Illyrian origin of the Albanians. The great Serbian archaeologist Milutin Garašanin, who drew up the conclusions of the above-mentioned session, affirmed that the Albanians have no historical rights in Kosovo.<sup>7</sup> He claims in his paper that the Dardanians were Thracians, although in his previous studies he accepted the theory of the Illyrian origin of this tribe.<sup>8</sup> The problem of the ethnic origin of the Albanians and of their continuity in Kosovo was discussed even at the Congress of the Serbian Communist Party in June 1982, when the speakers said that the theory of the Illyrian origin of the Albanian people is racist.

Croatian historian Aleksander Stipčević remarks that:

In fact, the theory of Albanian autochthony has never been disputed with such determination and savagery as today, precisely when so much scientific proof has been produced in its support. Nevertheless, the number of researchers still today refusing to take into consideration the many arguments supplied by different academic disciplines has shrunk, or, more accurately, absolutely the only researchers who deny the theory of Albanian autochthony are Serbian. Serbian archaeologists and historians began long ago to dispute the autochthony theory, but this opposition increased especially after the great Albanian revolt in Kosova in 1981. It was therefore a consequence of a political event rather than of new scientific data. . . . The Serbs vigorously attacked the idea that the Dardanians were ethnically Illyrian. Not because they were led to this conclusion by scientific evidence, but purely because Kosova was "the cradle of Serbian history" and "holy soil" for the Serbs, and as such could not have been inhabited by a people that



were of Illyrian stock and hence claimed by their descendants, the Albanians. . . . No Serbian researcher can freely express his opinion over the Illyrian-Albanian question without exposing himself to the danger of charges of high treason.<sup>9</sup>

The opposition against the Albanian autochthony led to some unthinkable exaggerations. A Serbian archaeologist tried to demonstrate that the Albanians came from Caucasus in the seventh century. (There is indeed a people called Albanoi attested to in Caucasus, but there is no proof for such migration). He also claims that:

Metohija and Kosovo, as well as the areas farther to the east and south, were integrated into the Serb lands not later than the seventh century. It is possible that there lived other Slavs or autochthonous population, but this has not been supported by convincing evidence. The Field of Kosovo attracted the Serbs by its situation at a divide, its fitness for cattle-breeding, for summer settlements and agriculture. . . . Owing to natural and geographical circumstances, this area, situated south-east of Serb lands, became the core of the Serb state.<sup>10</sup>

Yugoslavian historians fulfilled an intensive propaganda campaign in order to convince the Western public of their rights. For instance, the massive volume entitled *Le Kosovo-Metohija dans l'histoire Serbe* (published at Lausanne in 1990) presents the historical rights of Yugoslavia in Kosovo with the aid of several well-informed and convincing studies that cover the entire history of the region from the early Middle Ages to the 1980s, emphasizing the permanence of the Serbs in Kosovo and the lack of historical rights of the Albanians over this region. During the Kosovo war, Yugoslavian historians succeeded in publishing a very impressive catalog of archaeological discoveries from Kosovo, dated from Neolithic times to the Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup> The work indeed has scientific value, but it also has an obvious propagandistic purpose because it shows the antiquity and brightness of the Slavic civilization created in Kosovo.

The medieval history of Serbia is widely presented on the Internet. Several websites were dedicated to this subject during the Kosovo crisis and after (for instance: [www.kosovo.com](http://www.kosovo.com), [www.decani.yunet.com](http://www.decani.yunet.com), [www.srpska-mreza.com/Kosovo](http://www.srpska-mreza.com/Kosovo)). Some of them contain the texts of monographs written by Western scholars who embraced the Serbian point of view. Among these works is Hugo Roth's *Kosovo Origins*, first printed by "Nikola Pasić" Publishing House, Belgrade, 1996—an impartial description of the problems of the history of this region, from the origin of the Albanians to the 1980s. These websites created in Yugoslavia or by the Serbian diaspora give various data on the history of Kosovo, emphasizing its glorious Middle Ages.



On the other side, Albanian historians and linguists tried to give full support to the Kosovar autonomy. During the Communist period and after, they tried to prove the autochthony of the Albanians in Kosovo (the Roman province Dardania) by linguistic and archaeological evidence. The dogma of the Illyrian origin of the Albanian people clearly has this purpose.

In 1985 the volume *The Albanians and Their Territories* was published at Tirana (there is also a German version, *Die Albaner und ihre Gebiete*). The studies were written especially by Albanian historians and linguists, but there is also a piece by Alain Ducellier, "Have the Albanians Occupied Kosova?" With his prestige as a great Byzantinist, French historian Ducellier gave great support to the viewpoints expressed by Albanian historiography. He is the author of many important studies on Albania during the eleventh–fourteenth centuries, published since the 1960s. As concerns the Kosovo problem, Ducellier upholds the rights of the Albanian population, on the basis of its autochthony and because the Albanians became a majority again during the Ottoman domination.<sup>12</sup>

Another collection of studies, documents, and newspaper articles entitled *The Truth on Kosova* was edited by the Institute of History of the Albanian Academy of Sciences in 1989 in Albanian and next in English, in 1993.<sup>13</sup> Its target was to reply to another volume, published in Belgrade in 1989, *Kosovo—Past and Present* (the original version of the volume was published in Lausanne in 1990). Among the authors who contributed to the Albanian miscellany are noted scholars like Skënder Anamali, Eqrem Çabej, and Alain Ducellier. In the final part of the volume are various texts from the 1980s concerning political attitudes supporting the autonomy of Kosovo (including an interview with Ibrahim Rugova).

This mixture of science and politics is typical for how the propaganda was understood at Tirana during the Communist regime and also after its fall. On the contrary, the volume published in Belgrade in 1988 by the Serbian Academy does not remember the present situation of Kosovo, except some brief instances in the foreword and in the conclusion. However, we should note that the historical and linguistic studies included in the volume published at Tirana in 1989 and 1993 brought important contributions to the knowledge of the medieval history of Kosovo. They are not propaganda texts, but scientific works that can be used for propagandistic purposes.

The Albanian emigration from Western Europe and the United States crossed over the opposition against the Communist regime of Albania, being involved in the propaganda for Kosovo, just after the revolts in Prishtina in 1981. The Albanian community from New York organized in November 1982 a symposium dedicated to the problem of the Kosovar Albanians; its papers were published in 1984. At the symposium Albanian specialists from the diaspora took part, as did French, German and American historians. The volume begins with a study by well-known Byzantinist and Albanologist



(and Albanophile) Alain Ducellier, which explains why Albanians failed to found a powerful state in the Middle Ages; he also emphasizes the Albanian presence in Kosovo.<sup>14</sup> The editors (Arshi Pipa and Sami Repishti) have prophetically shown that Kosovo is "an intricate ethnic problem, which, due to its magnitude and explosive potential, may provoke serious troubles in the Balkans, thus destabilizing the *status quo* in Europe."<sup>15</sup> The book analyzes both the past and the present, with the purpose of legitimating the collective rights of the Albanians in Kosovo through their history. The situation of Kosovo in the Yugoslavian federation is presented from political, demographical, and economic points of view. Although the result of a scientific meeting, the volume has a clear propagandistic message, addressed to possible groups of influence able to support the autonomy or the secession of Kosovo. Among the other studies included in the book, we remember: Anton Logoreci, *A Clash between Two Nationalities in Kosova (185–194)*, Peter Bartl, *Kosovo and Macedonia as Reflected in Ecclesiastical Reports (23–40)*, and Hartmut Albert, *Kosovo 1979, Albania 1980 (103–121)*. In the same year the monograph of an Albanian author who explained for the public at large the evolution of Serbian–Albanian relations in Kosovo and the theory of Albanian autochthony in Kosovo was published in New York. The book has now an online version.<sup>16</sup>

A scientific journal entitled *The International Journal of Albanian Studies* was founded in 1997 by a group of Albanian historians led by Shinasi A. Rama from Columbia University, New York. The journal has published studies of modern and contemporary history, but also some contributions to medieval history, like that of Selami Pulaha, *On the Autochthony of Albanians in Kosova and the Postulated Massive Serb Migration at the End of the XVIIth Century*, (number 2, 1998, 1), which supports the continuity of the Albanians in Kosovo from antiquity to the beginning of modern times (it is the translation of the study published at Tirana in 1985).

The Internet is also used for Albanian claims. An important website with rich data on the history of the Albanians from Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro is [www.albanian.com](http://www.albanian.com). For instance, the already quoted study of A. Ducellier about Kosovo is presented on this site.

The Serbs are not autochthonous in Kosovo, because the Slavs as a whole are not a genuine Balkan population. It is likewise true that the Albanians reached a majority in Kosovo during the Ottoman domination because they benefited from that regime. We can also remark that nobody in this quarrel speaks about the Aromanians, although this population was recorded by Serbian deeds since the first years of the Serbian domination in Kosovo. Even the family of Balšić (Balsha) seems to be of Vlach origin. Kosovo became part of Serbia only in the thirteenth century, when—it is true—it became the political and spiritual center of the state, until the end of the fourteenth century. Serbia conquered Kosovo as part of its imperial



policy. This province acquired a symbolic place in the Serbian and Yugoslavian national mythologies<sup>17</sup> for several reasons: in Kosovo ruled the great emperor Stephen Dušan, in Kosovo were built the most important Serbian religious monuments, and finally in Kosovo took place the heroic battle against the Ottomans in 1389. For the Serbs, as observes a Serbian Canadian scholar:

a romantic, idealized vision of that medieval state was often proposed as a paradigm for the future in the popular discourses of politics, scholarship and literature. Among the Serbs and their neighbors this invocation of the past as a justification for present and future rights and options, the coupling of history with contemporary issues, not only durably influenced debates about choices to be made today and tomorrow, but also clouded the critical examination of historical facts.<sup>18</sup>

In the Serbian political conscience, Kosovo and Macedonia are still designated as *Stara Srbija* ("The Old Serbia"), a name that was used without justification even in some Yugoslavian scientific works.<sup>19</sup> Kosovo is a kind of Holy Land of the Serbs. As is remarked in a recent analysis of the development of the Serbian ethnic identity, "at the moment when Kosovo stopped being the factual homeland of Serbian people (when the Turks came), it became their mythic homeland."<sup>20</sup> However, somebody observed that the battle of 1389 from Kosovopolje that fueled the Serbian victimization myth was not the battle of the Serbs for the salvation of the Christian world, as is often stated, because in the confrontation fought a regional coalition that included, besides the Serbian prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, the Bosnian king Tvrtko and the Albanian rulers George II Balšić (Balsha) and Theodore II Muzaka (the latter lost four thousand men on the battlefield).<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Kosovo was defended both by Serbs and by Albanians.

In fact, medieval history does not allow us to decide who now has more rights in Kosovo: the Albanians, the Serbs, or maybe the Aromanians? This is the historical reality. But reality can be manipulated according to the interests of each party involved, because each can find useful and valid arguments for its point of view, Serbian or Albanian. The use and abuse of medieval history is not able to resolve the interethnic conflict of Kosovo.

### THE HISTORICAL MACEDONIA—THE APPLE OF DISCORD AMONG GREECE, BULGARIA, AND SERBIA

The troubled history of Macedonia makes difficult even the definition of the limits of this region. In classical antiquity, Macedonia was located



Communist Bulgarian historiography (also translated in the former East Germany). He affirms that Macedonia was one of the three heart zones of the Bulgarians, together with Moesia and Thrace. The synthesis between the Proto-Bulgarians and the Slavs was achieved in each of these zones. The participation of the Greek and Roman populations at the formation of the Bulgarian people is not mentioned, but it is emphasized that the annexation of Macedonia by Boris accomplished the unification of the Bulgarian ethnogenesis area, and that the missionary activity of St. Clement of Ochrid gave to Macedonia a very important place in the history of medieval Bulgaria.<sup>80</sup> In this way, as in Serbian propaganda, Macedonia received a symbolic central position in Bulgarian history, although from the geographical point of view this region is marginal.

## NOTES

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